

THE
ROANOKE RELIGIOUS
CORRESPONDENT,
OR,
MONTHLY EVANGELICAL VISITANT.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."—John vi. 12.
"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."—Danl. xii. 4.

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THE VIRGINIA BAPTIST
CHRONICLE.

CHAP. III.—SEC. 2.

*The Persecution of the Baptists,
Concluded.*

The county of Spottsylvania appears to have led the way in this persecution. On Saturday, the 4th of June, 1768, John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, and James Reed, were seized by the sheriff, and bro't before three magistrates, who were waiting in the meeting house yard, and bound them in the penalty of £1000, to appear at court on the following Monday. They were there arraigned as disturbers of the peace, and required to give bond and security not to preach in the County under twelve months. This they conscientiously refused, and were ordered into close jail; to this they meekly submitted. As they moved on from the Court House to the prison, attended by a numerous crowd, they sung the hymn from Dr. Watts, "*Broad is the road that leads to death,*" &c.

This had a very solemn appearance, and produced a singular excitement. After four weeks confinement, Lewis Craig was released from prison, in order to procure a release for his suffering companions. He waited on the Deputy Governor, the Hon. John Blair, and stated the case to him, and received the following letter, directed to the King's attorney of Spottsylvania. As we think that this letter reflects honor on the worthy gentleman who wrote it, we shall give it entire from Semple's History:

"SIR: I lately received a letter, signed by a good number of worthy gentlemen who are not here, complaining of the Baptists; the particulars of their misbehavior are not told, any further than their running in to private houses and making dissensions. Mr. Craig, and Mr. B. Waller, are now with me and deny the charge: they tell me they are willing to take the oaths, as others have: I told them that I had consulted the

attorney general, who is of opinion, that the general court only have a right to grant licenses, and therefore I referred them to court; but on their application to the attorney general, they brought me his letter, advising me to write to you.—That their petition was a matter of right, and that you may not molest these conscientious people, so long as they behave themselves in a manner becoming pious christians and in obedience to the laws, till court, when they intend to apply for license, and when the gentlemen who complain, may offer their objections and be heard. The act of toleration (it being found by experience, that persecuting dissenters increases their numbers) has given them a right to apply in a proper manner, for licensed houses for the worship of God, according to their consciences; and I persuade myself, the gentlemen will quietly overlook their meetings till the court. I am told, they administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper, near the manner we do, and differ in nothing from our Church but that of baptism, and their renewing the ancient discipline, by which they have reformed some sinners and brought them to be truly penitent; nay, if a man of theirs be idle, and neglects to provide for his family as he ought, he incurs their censures, which have had good effects. If this be their behaviour, it were to be wished we

had some of it among us: But at least, I hope, all may remain quiet till the court. I am, with great respects to the gentlemen, Sir, your humble servant,

JOHN BLAIR."

When the Attorney received this letter he would have nothing to say in the affair. Waller and his companions continued 43 days in jail, and were then discharged without any conditions. They returned to their homes, and being strengthened by their sufferings, resumed their labors with redoubled vigour; and their success was equal to their exertions. From this period persecution raged and progressed in those counties in which the parsons, magistrates, and leading men, were wicked enough to persecute, until sometime in the year 1774, that is, for about 6 years, during which period about 20 Baptist preachers, and some who were nothing more than exhorters, were honored with a prison; several of them were imprisoned twice, and one at least (John Waller) three times, and in as many different jails. The trials and sufferings of these servants of God were so similar that a detailed account of them would be like a recital of the same facts, and of very little benefit to our readers; let it suffice to say, that they bore their vexatious persecutions with the spirit of meekness, patience, and christian forbearance, displaying at the same time much firmness and forti-

tude. They spent much time in prayer, reading, and singing the praises of their Redeemer, in pious conversation, and in giving wholesome advice to distressed and enquiring souls, who came to consult them.

They commonly preached through the iron grates of the prison twice a week to numerous congregations, who assembled for the purpose of hearing the word of life. The preaching from the prison appeared to have a double energy, the people viewed it with a kind of superstitious reverence, so that it caused great excitement; some were awakened, and cried out, "what must we do to be saved?" some wept, some obtained a hope of eternal life, and others rejoiced to see the work of the Lord advancing: the wicked sometimes would curse and blaspheme, and drunken wretches were sometimes hired to beat a drum, to drown the noise and prevent the effects of the preaching. The preachers, when first cast into prison, usually suffered a few days for proper and substantial nourishment; but no sooner had the people in the vicinity heard thereof, but they came flocking from every quarter, bringing with them every thing necessary to nourish and comfort the poor prisoners, so that their abundance was so great that they often gave the surplus to the poor, or handed it out to the people to keep it from spoiling. The time of their continuance in prison dif-

fered, according to circumstances, and the caprice of their persecutors; some gave bond and security not to preach in the county under twelve months; others were discharged by giving bond, merely for good behaviour. They at length got information, that they had a right to obtain the privilege of the prison bounds on giving bond and sufficient security; this they availed themselves of and obtained the bounds. They had then the aspect of preachers stationed in the centre of the county; the people would assemble twice a week to hear preaching; in this way many good seeds were sown and much good was done. This no doubt greatly irritated their malignant foes, and made them nearly gnash their teeth; but they had done their utmost, they had spent their greatest rage; the prisoners were dismissed in some cases merely to get rid of them; and if the soil of Virginia has not been stained with vital blood for conscience sake, it was because there was no existing law to authorize it.

From the beginning of this persecution until the revolution in 1776, the Baptists were unremitting in their endeavors to obtain liberty of conscience; they alleged that their imprisonment was illegal; they contended for and claimed the rights of British subjects, equal to those on the other side of the Atlantic: their judges, however, decided to the contrary, and

there was no regular appeal. When they could not succeed in this way, they had recourse to the general court in order to obtain license to preach at certain places in each county, agreeably to the toleration law in England. After some difficulty they succeeded in this, and certain places were licensed accordingly: but to a people prompted with zeal for the salvation of souls, and the propagation of truth, this was but a very limited acquisition; their boundless desire was to preach the gospel to every creature.

In these struggles of the Baptists to obtain liberty of conscience, they were fortunate in securing an interest in the able assistance of the late justly celebrated and honorable Patrick Henry. Understanding the principles of liberty, and being at all times its steady supporter, he needed only to be informed of their oppression, and without hesitation he voluntarily, and disinterestedly stepped forward to their relief. From this period to the day of their complete emancipation from the cruel shackles of tyranny, the Baptists found in Mr. Henry, an unwavering, constant, and powerful friend. His venerable name will ever stand high on the lists of fame, when the memory of tyrants and despots will be sunk in dark oblivion, or be recollected with horror and contempt. May the blessings of Heaven attend his posterity to the latest generation.

But these legal (or rather illegal) persecutions were only a part of the trials and vexations which the Baptists in general, and the preachers in particular suffered at this season; not to mention the fabricated lies and malicious falsehoods which passed for current truth in this day, and were circulated with a cruel avidity. The preachers were sometimes hindered from preaching by a sort of unlawful mobs, promiscuously collected for that purpose; these on some occasions would be opposed by counter parties, (not of professors of religion) but of such as thought it best to let the Baptists alone; this would occasion a sort of an affray or skirmish, and always ended in confusion. Several preachers and some private members were beaten with whips and clubs in this way. Elder John Waller, while preaching, was pulled off the stage, and struck several times with a whip, but the wrath of his enemies subsiding, he again ascended the stage and finished his discourse. Several preachers at different times were seized by rude mobs and dragged to some adjacent water, and ducked, until they were almost drowned. Elder James Reed was once, while he was preaching, dragged off the stage, and then kicked and cuffed, and pushed some distance to a fence; here his enemies left him; he then returned and finished his discourse. At a certain time, Elder Elijah Baker was seized

by a lawless banditti, and forcibly carried on board of a ship; they engaged the captain to make him work his passage to some foreign country, and there to leave him, telling the captain that Baker was a pestilent fellow, and a great disturber of the peace. Mr. B. was set to work, and worked till late at night; the next morning being Sabbath, Mr. B. asked leave of the captain to perform worship; accordingly, the ship's crew were collected. Mr. B. sung, prayed, and exhorted, the seamen with such effect that the captain set him ashore; saying he would never do injury to a good man, to gratify the rancour and malice of his wicked enemies. We could go on to relate many more facts of the like nature, but, let the above specimen suffice. Here let us pause—all is peace and tranquil around us; we have no grievances to redress, no injuries to retaliate, no wrongs to revenge, nor no enemies to conciliate.

In the beginning of the revolutionary struggle, the dissenters in general, and the Baptists in particular, were republicans from interest as well as from principle; they had been persecuted and imprisoned, as they believed, without law or justice; the affliction and the misery the wormwood and the gall, were fresh in their memories. The leading men who were advocates for Republicanism, viewed the established

church and clergy as an appendage of Monarchy, and one of its chief pillars: the Baptists had become numerous, their principles were widely disseminated, and had taken deep root, the persecution and sufferings of their preachers had rendered them popular, especially amongst the common people; and the common people of every country are more or less republicans. "To resist British oppressions effectually, it was necessary to soothe the minds of the people by every species of policy. The dissenters were too powerful to be slighted, and they were too watchful to be cheated by an ineffectual sacrifice. There had been a time when they would have been satisfied to have paid their tithes, if they could have had liberty of conscience; but now, the crisis was such that nothing less than a total overthrow of all ecclesiastical distinctions would satisfy their sanguine hopes.—Having started the decaying edifice, every dissenter put too his shoulder to push it into irretrievable ruin. The revolutionary party found that the sacrifice must be made, and they made it." (a)

*William** was pleased their zeal to see,
And made a law, they should be free;
That *Hornworms*† no more should de-
mand

Tobacco from a *Pismire*'s‡ hand.

LELAND.

(a) Semple's history, page 27.

* The government of Virginia.

† The established clergy.

‡ The dissenters.

From Scott's Memoirs.

THE PROMISE OF GOD.

He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.

Prov. 19. 17.

Mr. Scott, in the course of his ministerial duties, became acquainted with a female servant who was reduced by disease just deemed incurable, and who was on the point of going into the London work-house.—Having a high opinion of her character, and knowing the society in a work-house would be very irksome to her, he took her to his own home; though he had a large family and a small income. He had at the time money in his hands, which his affluent friends had intrusted with him for the needy, which defrayed part of the expense. She lived with him 17 or 18 years, unable to walk up and down stairs, a poor suffering diseased person. *Yet the Lord provided.* Several families in which she had lived, contributed for her support, and the expense to Mr. Scott was not great. The Lord *paid* him. He set about building a parsonage at Aston, with small resources, and borrowed money for the purpose. At this juncture, a member of one of those families in which his sick charge had lived, and to which Mr. Scott was known chiefly by her means, died, and left him a legacy of £200. Several years after, another of the family left him £40. It is worthy a remark also, that Mr. Scott's son

states, after his father's decease, that the presence of this person was esteemed a privilege by servants, as well as master and mistress, who had received her under their roof.

This poor invalid, thus beloved, and thus provided for, was herself also an instance of the Lord's faithfulness to his promise above quoted. When she was in health, she *expended all her savings*, made in service, upon her aged and distressed parents, in the confidence that God would raise her up friends, in case the time should come, when she should not be able to maintain herself. That time *did* come, and we have seen the Lord *did* provide.

From Cecil's Remains.

Detached thoughts on Preaching.

Christianity is so great and surprising in its nature, that, in preaching it to others, I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued divine operation. It is no difficult thing to change a man's opinions. It is no difficult thing to attach a man to my person and notions. It is no difficult thing to convert a proud man to spiritual pride, or a passionate zeal for some religious party. But to bring a man to love God—to love the law of God, while it condemns him—to loath himself before God—to tread the earth under his feet—to hunger and thirst after God in Christ, and after the mind that was in Christ—with man this is im-

possible! But God has said it shall be done, and bids me go forth and preach, that by me as his instrument, he may effect these great ends; and therefore I go. Yet I am obliged continually to call my mind back to my principles. I feel angry, perhaps, with a man, because he will not let me convert him; in spite of all I can say, he will still love the world.

Owen remarks that it is not sufficiently considered how much a minister's personal religion is exposed to danger, from the very circumstance of religion being his profession and employment. He must go thro' the acts of religion: he must put on the appearance of religion: he must utter the language and display the feelings of religion. It requires double diligence and vigilance, to maintain, under such circumstances, the spirit of religion. I have prayed; I have talked; I have preached; but now I should perish, after all, if I did not feed on the bread which I have broken to others.

A minister must cultivate a tender spirit. If he does this so as to carry a savour and unction into his work, he will have far more weight than other men. This is the result of a devotional habit. To affect feeling is nauseous and soon detected: but to feel, is the readiest way to the hearts of others.

A man of the world will bear to hear me read in the desk that awful passage: *Wide is the*

gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it Nay, he will approve it;—"The minister is in the desk: he is reading the lesson of the day." But this very man—were I to go home with him, and tell him in his parlour, that most of those whom he knows and loves are going on in that road to eternal destruction—this very man would brand the sentiment as harsh and uncharitable.—Though uttered by Christ himself, it is a declaration as fanatical and uncandid, in the judgment of the world, as could be put together in language.

Many hearers cannot enter into the reasons of the Cross. They adopt what I think is Butler's grand defect on this subject. He speaks of the cross as an appointment of God, and therefore to be submitted to: but God has said much in his word of the reasons of this appointment: that *he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth.*

That a minister may learn how to magnify his office, let him study the character, the spirit, and the history of St. Paul. His life and death were one magnifying of his office: mark his object—to win souls!—to execute the will of God! As the man rises in his own esteem, his office sinks; but, as the office rises in his view, the

man falls. He must be in constant hostility with himself, if he would magnify his office. He must hold himself in readiness to make sacrifices when called to do so: he will not barter his office like Balaam; but will refuse to sell his service, like Micaiah. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, he will refuse to come down from the great work which he has to do. He may be calumniated; but he will avoid hasty vindications of his character: it does not appear that Elisha sent after Naaman to vindicate himself from the falsehoods of Gehazi: there appears to me much true dignity in this conduct: I fear I should have wanted patience to act thus.

The grand aim of a minister must be *the exhibition of Gospel truth*. Statesmen may make the greatest blunders in the world, but that is not *his* affair. Like a king's messenger, he must not stop to take care of a person fallen down; if he can render any kindness consistently with his duty, he will do it; if not, he will prefer his office.

Our method of preaching is not that by which Christianity was propagated: yet the genius of Christianity is not changed. There was nothing in the primitive method set or formal. The primitive bishop stood up, and read the gospel, or some other portion of scripture, and pressed on the hearers, with great earnestness and affection, a few plain and forcible truths

evidently resulting from that portion of the Divine word: we take a text, and make an oration. Edification was then the object of both speaker and hearers; and, while this continues to be the object, no better method can be found. A parable, or history, or passage of scripture, thus illustrated or enforced, is the best method of introducing truth to any people who are ignorant of it, and of setting it home with power on those who know it; and not formal, doctrinal, argumentative discourses. *Truth and simplicity* are the soul of an efficacious ministry.

The Puritans were still farther removed from the primitive method of preaching; they would preach fifteen or sixteen sermons on a text. A primitive bishop would have been shocked with one of our sermons, and such is our taste, we should be shocked with his. They brought forward scripture: we bring forward our statements. They directed all their observations to throw light on scripture: we quote scripture to throw light on our observations. More faith & more grace would make us better preachers, for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. Chrysostom's was the right method. Leighton's Lectures on Peter approach very near to this method.

GOOD NEWS.

The last meeting of the Roanoke Association, which was held at Rice's meeting house, Lower Banister Church, Pittsylvania county, in May last, has, we hope, been attended with a divine blessing to that section of country. In the neighborhood of this church, for about two months previous to the meeting of the Association there had been a serious and solemn attention to the preaching of the word. The hearts of numbers were opened, and in many the precious seed had germinated; it is now manifested that the Lord had been preparing the way for the reception of his word. At the meeting of the Association, the word preached appeared to be in demonstration of the spirit and power, and mixed with faith in numbers of those who heard it; the showers of mercy kindly descended, and the work of the Lord was visibly manifest.—Since the above mentioned period, the gracious work has been progressing in a solemn and marvellous manner; multitudes of mourning and anxiously enquiring souls attend our meetings, not only on the Sabbath, but also on any day or evening in the week. Our meetings are indeed solemn as death, very little noise except heartfelt groans, broken sobs, and deep sighs, now and then intermixed with sudden exclamations, as, Lord have mercy on me! What shall I do to be sav-

ed! Pray for me! &c. &c. The crowded assemblies seemed to hang on the lips of the preacher with anxious sensibility, and with eager avidity to drink in the precious truths of the Gospel.

Sunday, July 20.—Lower Banister Church has received eleven candidates for baptism, eight of whom have been baptized in Banister River, agreeably to the ancient and scriptural mode. The banks of the River were lined with solemn spectators; the greater part of whom were anxious inquirers; their mingled groans, ascending sighs, and flowing tears, were intermixed with the pleasing accents of joy and rejoicing amongst the saints, who seemed to hail the long desired season as the beginning of a jubilee, and the prelude of a copious harvest of precious and immortal souls.

Around this highly favored spot, the gracious work is progressing in every direction, every day brings the joyful news of the triumphs of the Cross. The number of young converts are fast increasing on every side, who are ardently waiting an opportunity to relate to the Church what God has done for their souls; while the good work has reached, and is rapidly progressing in some of the adjacent Churches.—“The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice”—Let the whole earth be filled with his glory—Amen and amen.

(To be Continued.)

From the Kentucky Baptist Monitor.

We have been favored with the perusal of the minutes of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Association, held at Salem Meeting House, Missouri, on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of Sept. last.—Within the bounds of the Association, comprising 16 churches, during the previous year, 218 have been received by baptism; by letter, 123; dismissed by letter, 102; excluded, 11; dead, 22; total, 942.

This is indeed good news from a far country—a country which, a few years ago, was literally a wilderness. But now the desert has blossomed as the rose, and the wilderness and solitary places are made glad by reason of the sweet and solitary sound of the gospel. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.” The Lord hath done great things for Zion, whereof we are glad.

The following interesting details, relative to the Lord's gracious dealings with his people, have been furnished us by Elder Isaac Taylor, of Shelby co. whose ministerial labors were greatly blest in the promotion of the work of the Lord, to which they relate.

“Some time towards the close of the year 1821, a revival of religion commenced in the upper part of Shelby county, and in the spring and summer of 1822, became pretty general

throughout the county. The eagerness manifested by every rank and condition of society, to attend places of worship, was remarkable indeed. Difficulties of a trifling nature could not now detain those at home on whose consciences was written, as with the Eternal hand, “*Tekel*: Thou art weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and found wanting.” No; they were seen in thick ranks flying to the house of God as a cloud, and as doves to their windows. And when there, during the performance of divine service, the greatest order and solemnity was observable in those crowded assemblies. They seemed to hang on the preacher's lips, as those who were hearing for life and eternity. The sighs and groans of the penitent were the only sounds to be heard, save the preacher's voice; whose heart was now touched with a live coal from the altar of God, and whose tongue seemed as the pen of a ready writer. Saints were made to rejoice in the God of their salvation, and sinners to tremble under a feeling sense of their guilt and condemnation; and more especially to mourn on account of the hardness of their hearts and sinfulness of their natures. Between 800 and 1000 have been led to hope that they have found *him of whom* Moses and the prophets did write, and have received him by faith as the end of the law for *righteousness* to their poor, naked, perishing souls; have been baptised and added to the Bap-

tist church. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. O, that all men would praise the Lord for his wonderful works to the children of men!

"A precious refreshing has also been experienced by the Cox's Creek Church, Nelson county, during the last year.—Early in the spring, a strong desire for the salvation of sinners seemed to rest on the minds of many of the brethren. Prayer meetings were appointed, and several members bore a part in the service with increased zeal and energy. The set time to favour Zion was now fully come; the Lord heard the cries of his servants and came down for their help. Proud, cold-hearted sinners, who could formerly philosophize and explain away the Scriptures, so as to make them truckle to their own fond conceits and selfish views, were now brought to realize and own their condemnation just and right of a holy God, to whom they cried mightily for mercy; and blessed be his name, he led them by a way which they knew not, and in paths which they had not known. He brought them to see a beauty and suitableness in the Redemption of Jesus Christ, and they were constrained *willingly* to accept of salvation on the humiliating terms of the gospel of Christ. Between 70 and 80 have been baptized and added to the church."

Reader, if thou art an enemy to the gospel of Jesus Christ; if you consider it the invention of men, and not the work of God,

reflect and determine, if you can, how it is that so many of *your* sentiments, are brought to embrace, cordially and heartily embrace that which *they* (as well as *you*) esteemed the most consummate foolishness. May the God of *grace* enable you to draw just conclusions—repent of your sins—and lead you to fall in with Christ as the way, the truth, and the life.

Extract of a letter from Elder M. Cole, dated Charleston, (*Indiana*) March 22, 1823.

In the course of last season the Lord revived his cause in several of the churches which I attend. Many were brought to see and to feel that they were sinners, and to view Jesus Christ as the only Saviour, and were buried with him in baptism. The work is gradually going on.—At almost every meeting there are some additions.

Extract of a letter from Elder M. Rogers, dated Chariton, (*Missouri*), March 26, 1823.

Having given you some account of my temporal affairs, I wish to give you some information relative to the cause of our blessed Redeemer, in this wilderness country, which is a more pleasing object. When I came to this country first, the prospect with regard to religion was gloomy indeed. I endeavoured in my feeble manner to impress on the minds of the few Baptists who were here, the propriety of forming themselves into little churches. About two years and a half ago, we constituted a

small church in Chariton, of 18 members, and I was ordained over them. The Lord has been pleased to pour out his blessing upon us. We are now upwards of ninety, and the work is still going on gradually. We baptised five at the last monthly meeting. I attend several churches as often as I can. There is a considerable revival in a little town on the south side of the Missouri river, which I attend. We received ten there last sabbath. My hands are full; I teach school in the day, and preach at night. But I am nearly worn out; my lungs at this time are much affected; I can hardly talk. There are but few preachers in this part of the country.

I am truly sorry that the cause of religion is so slow with you. I fear the brethren have grown careless, cold and prayerless — You ought to appoint prayer meetings, for the purpose of meeting together to pray that the Lord would revive his work among you.

From the American Baptist Magazine.

NON-ESSENTIAL.

This term, it is conceived, is often used in a latitude which neither scripture nor reason will justify. If a duty has become unfashionable, so that the performance of it would be a cross to a proud heart, it is only necessary to persuade one's self that it is non-essential, and the conscience will be easily quieted.

But that some things are essential to the existence of what-

ever does exist, is a self evident proposition. Hence some things are vitally important to the existence of religion, as well as to all other things, and without which it cannot exist. There are other things which may be considered merely as appendages, and not as essential parts. Such for instance, as the position of the body in prayer. This duty may be acceptably performed, either standing, kneeling, or prostrate, provided the heart be right. So also in public worship, whether it be commenced with prayer, with singing, or with reading the holy scriptures, is not essential to acceptable worship, if the services are performed in spirit and in truth.

Religion in the soul is by the apostle called the new man: we may therefore make use of this figure, to illustrate our subject. Man, contemplated as a distinct species, may be considered as perfect, when all his members are complete, and when the bodily organs regularly discharge their proper functions. Add any thing to such a body, and you will perceive, that the addition is wholly superfluous and useless: take any thing from it, and it will appear maimed and defective.

A man, however, may lose one or more of his limbs, and yet exist, and enjoy a good measure of health and vigour. But separate the head, or destroy the action of the heart, and he will expire in a moment. These parts, then, must be considered as vitally important to existence.

But shall we say, because a man may exist with the loss of a leg or an arm, that these members are therefore not essential parts of the body? Surely not. For though the body may exist without them, it nevertheless exists in an imperfect, disfigured state. Its beauty and usefulness are greatly marred.

Thus it is with religion; it will be admitted, that it may exist in the soul where much imperfection both in faith and practice, still remain. Yet there are some articles of faith, without the belief of which, it is impossible, according to the scriptures to pronounce the man a Christian.

A man may practice numerous religious rites, and be conscientiously devout, and yet be far from being a Christian. There are religious Pagans, & devout Musselmans, but they are not Christians. A man may be devout even to enthusiasm, although his religion be entirely false.

On the other hand, there are others who bear the name of Christians, who are so very indifferent to many parts of divine revelation, that it is difficult to determine what they believe, or whether they believe at all. Such would do well to compare their faith with what Christ said to the Jews: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Upon this they immediately asked, "Who art thou? And Jesus said unto them, the same that I said unto you from the beginning." What char-

acter did Christ claim from the beginning? Did he only claim that of an inspired man? or did he claim that of the Son of God, in a higher sense than any other mortal ever did? To illustrate his meaning, he said, "I and my Father are one." At this, the Jews took up stones to stone him. "Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. We would here seriously ask, Will our eternal state be equally safe, if we believe in a character totally different from that which Christ claimed from the beginning, as to believe in him as the Son of God, and one with the Father? or shall we rank faith among the non-essentials of Christianity?

Will it be said, with a view to neutralize these remarks, that error in opinion is perfectly harmless, provided we are honest in our belief. Or shall we say with Pope.

"For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

Hence you may believe any thing, or nothing, without taking pains to inquire what is right.

Faith is the result of hearing; and if it be of no importance what we believe, then it can be of no importance what we preach! But before we admit

such a sentiment as this, let us hear the apostle upon the subject. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Then it would be dangerous to believe a false gospel. If the apostle is correct, one gospel is true, and all others are false. Nay more, every man that preaches a perverted or false gospel, renders himself liable to the curse denounced by this holy apostle.

In order to save the ruined souls of men from sinking, "God has laid in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." On this, and no where else, men may build for eternity. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Will any one say, that it is not essential either to our safety or happiness to build upon this foundation? To what end, then, we ask, is a foundation laid, if not to build upon? And if no other foundation can be laid, then it follows, that if we are not built upon this, we shall inevitably be lost! This stone, which was set at naught by the Jewish buildings, is now become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

It is also asserted in the scriptures, that there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," &

is it not implied, that there is only one? We can as readily conceive of Lords, and two faiths, as of two baptisms. It is supposed by some, that this one baptism, is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But can uninspired men administer the baptism of the Holy Ghost, either to believing adults, or to infants? The thought is absurd, if not impious. Philip baptized the Samaritan converts, both men and women; but did not confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost on any. Peter and John, who came after him, did not baptize them, but only laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

The risen Saviour commissioned his disciples, "to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and added, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." It will be admitted, we presume, that to baptize is as really a command of Jesus Christ, as to preach. They are both united in the same command. Let us be careful not to put asunder, what God has joined together. But if baptism is a plain positive duty, commanded by our Lord and Saviour, have we a right to place it among the non-essential duties of Christianity? It stands upon the same footing with the command to commemorate the Saviour's death until he comes. And no more importance is attached to the latter than to the former.

If it should be asked, whether we consider baptism essential to salvation, we should answer in the negative. We should give the same answer respecting the Lord's supper. We do not consider a hand or a foot essential to life; but they are both essential to the perfection of the body. So are baptism and the Lord's supper to the perfection of the church or body of Christ. Where either of the ordinances is omitted, there is something wanting which needs to be set in order.

With a view to counteract the feelings of those, who discover a zeal which rises a little above indifference, to have the first positive institute regarded in its primitive purity and as it was delivered to the saints; its advocates are compared to the ancient Pharisees, whom Jesus admonished for paying tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, & omitting the weightier matters of the law. But it should be observed, that it was not for what they *did*, but what they *omitted*, that Jesus pronounced the wo upon them; for with regard to the tithes he said, *these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*,

Let us then be no longer in-

different to any of the commands of Christ, nor deterred from obedience, by the perpetual cry of non-essential. But let us be careful to "observe all things" which were given in charge by the Saviour to his disciples in the great commission. If we would "be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing," we must obey the whole will of God.

If an individual, or even a whole church, should, for any reasons whatever, live in the habitual neglect of any of the positive commands of Christ, although we may allow the one to be a Christian, and the other a Christian church, yet they cannot be said to be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing.

Do not err, my beloved brethren, by treating one of the special ordinances of the gospel, instituted by Christ himself, and sanctioned by his own example, as non-essential to the Christian character. Suffer us then, brethren, to caution you, that while on the one hand you give no reasonable ground for the charge of bigotry, so on the other, see that you do not think lightly of any of the commands of Jesus Christ, under an apprehension that they are non-essential.

ARCHIPPUS.

From Cowper's Poems.

FEELINGS OF THE AWAKENED AND BELIEVING
SOUL.

————— When the sinner feels
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels;
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,
Dashed into foaming waves begins to roar;
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,
Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong;
Asserts the rights of his offended Lord,
And death or restitution is the word:
The last impossible, he fears the first.
And, having well deserved, expects the worst.
Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home;
O for a shelter from the wrath to come!
Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide.
The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
I dare not—And you need not, God replies;
'The remedy you want I freely give;
'This book shall teach you; read, believe, and live!
'Tis done; the raging storm is heard no more,
Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore;
And Justice, guardian of the dread command,
Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.

As when a felon, whom his country's laws
Have justly doomed for some atrocious cause,
Expects, in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his misspent years;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play,
The thunder seems to summon him away,
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt and all his courage dies;
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear:
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul
Of him, whom hope has with a touch made whole.
'Tis heaven, all heaven descending on the wings
Of the glad legions of the King of kings;
'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,
'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
Oh, welcome now the sun's once hated light,
His noonday beams were never half so bright.
Not kindred minds alone are called to employ
Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy;
Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.